



## CLEO Annual Conference and AGM – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Liverpool Law Clinic, SLSJ Building, Chatham St, Liverpool L69 7ZR

10am	Refreshments
10.30am Welcome to Liverpool	<p><b>The Centre for People’s Justice</b> - Professor Helen Stalford</p> <p>Meet the Authors - <b>Clinical Legal Education, Theory and Practice</b>, a new textbook for students from OUP - forthcoming Jaqueline Kinghan, Amir Paz-Fuchs and Lucy Yeatman</p>
11am Parallel Session – Lightening Talks	<p>Session A – <b>Technology and Clinical Legal Education</b> with Andy Unger, Emma Jones, and Paul Messey</p> <p>Session B – <b>Social Justice in Clinical Legal Education</b> with Olanya Lewis, James Betts and Megan Cowan</p>
11.45am Roundtables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Law Tech</b> – Chair – Emma Jones and Graham Bramley</li> <li>2. <b>Employment Law</b> – Chair – Jenny Gibbons</li> <li>3. <b>Family Law</b> – Chair – Lucy Yeatman and Helenor Birt</li> <li>4. <b>Lawyers for Social Change</b> – Cameron Wong-McDermott and Jacqueline Kinghan</li> <li>5. <b>Policy Clinics</b> – Chair - Liz Hardie</li> <li>6. <b>Small Business Clinics</b> – Chair – Eliza Platts-Mills and Karen Watton</li> <li>7. <b>SEND</b> – Chair – James Betts and Deborah Tyfield</li> </ol>
1pm Lunch	Lunch
2pm CLEO Updates	<p>Report from the Chairs and Trustees, launch of the new website and other updates and news from CLEO.</p> <p>This session will include an interactive workshop for us to explore what Clinical Legal Education means to our members, what our values and priorities as an organisation should be.</p> <p>The session will end with the formal business of the AGM</p>
3.15 Refreshments	Refreshments



3.30pm Parallel Sessions – Lightening Talks	Session C – <b>Teaching and Assessment</b> with Lucy Yeatman, Victoria Roper, Hannah Marchant and Laura Bee  Session D – <b>Outreach and Community Partnerships</b> with Andy Todd, Jo Underwood, Laura Hyde
4.30pm	Finish

## Roundtables:

We are introducing roundtables to the conference this year, to provide members with an opportunity to connect with other clinicians working in the same areas to share ideas and develop partnerships. The past 10 years has seen a rapid expansion of clinical legal education in the UK and that expansion has led to a breadth of ideas and projects. It can be hard to find out what other clinics are doing and often we know from experience that sharing ideas and discussing plans can often lead to new ways of working and time saved in developing resources and training materials. We hope that the round table sessions will lead to new connections and collaborations and plans. During the CLEO update session after lunch we will ask chairs to feedback briefly on the roundtables and consider how CLEO can support and maintain networks across our community.

Some of the roundtables are already well-established as groups, for example policy clinics, but others are new. Please come to the roundtables ready to share what you do and with questions for others in the room.

## Peoples Justice Centre:

The Centre for People's Justice will improve law and lives through community-led research. Led by the University of Liverpool, the Centre is the result of a £5.8m investment by partner organisations, including a £4.1m investment by the UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council, the largest grant it has ever awarded to a Law School. The Centre for People's Justice will work across the UK in partnership with the Universities of Glasgow, Sheffield, Swansea, Wrexham, Ulster and the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies London.

The Centre will focus on how law is made, how law is performed in everyday life and how law is understood and applied by the public. It will put people's everyday priorities, like their jobs, family, safety, community, neighbourhoods, at the heart of research. The Centre will do so by working with people who have real-life experience of challenges that are commonly experienced and urgently need to be addressed: challenges such as poor-quality housing or being without a place to call home; insecure employment and low wages; violence at home or in the community;



or missing out on school. It will trial new ways for local communities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to work in partnership with academics, private sector, philanthropic, charitable and public sector organisations in support of change in law and legal systems that will improve lives.

The Centre's university partners are home to leading UK law clinics, where practitioners and law students provide free legal advice, information and representation to many thousands of local people on issues ranging from sexual violence, special educational needs and disabilities, asylum and immigration, housing and employment rights. Working with law clinics is one way in which the Centre for People's Justice can explore how the public could be better served by the justice system, better supported to access justice, and better informed about their rights.

[Centre for People's Justice | Liverpool Law School | University of Liverpool](#)

## Lightening Talks:

### Session A – Technology and Clinical Legal Education

#### Emma Jones, Sheffield Digital Justice Project

This talk will introduce the Sheffield Digital Justice pro bono initiative at the University of Sheffield. This innovative new initiative provides opportunities for law, criminology and computer science students to participate in a wide range of projects exploring the intersections between law and digital technology.

The initiative ran for the first time across the 2024/25 academic year, involving 20 students in semester 1 and 60 students in semester 2. Projects included working with Sheffield Citizens Advice and Law Centre, LexisNexis, Open Pro Bono (a US tech start-up) and etiCloud.(a Sheffield tech company).

This talk will reflect upon some of the opportunities and challenges involved in developing and running the initiative, with a particular focus on aspects of interdisciplinary collaboration and work with external stakeholders. It will provide practical tips for others considering running lawtech initiatives and suggestions for support and collaboration.

#### Paul Massey Libra Law AI Legal Assistant.

Libra Law are working with Northumbria University law clinic and a number other University clinics and the National Archives on a Legal AI Assistant named Libra. This is backed by a £2.5m Innovate UK grant. The goal is to help people self serve on their legal problems or be referred through to legal support for more complex issues. This



talk will give an update on our progress, opportunities and challenges with AI and Access to Justice and participation

## Andy Unger GenAI and Access to Justice – a practical experiment to create a Housing Law information and initial advice AI Agent

I have created a Custom GPT that can give out of hours legal information and initial advice on Housing Law to potential clients of university law clinics. The tool does not take away the need for expert human legal advisors, but aims to compliment the work of Law Clinics by helping people find out whether they need legal help and, if so, where to go to get it. I will demonstrate the Custom GPT and explain how I built it. Alan, who has 30 years' experience of working in Law Centres and our Legal Advice Clinic, will evaluate it. I am proposing that the approach is one that can be shared by other Law Clinics, working collaboratively.

## Session B – Social Justice In Clinical Legal Education

### Megan Cowan 'Encouraging law students to consider a future in social justice – lessons learned from a level 6 social justice module.'

This talk will provide an overview of a level 6 social justice module, which ran for the first time from March – June 2025 at the University of Chester Law School with a cohort of 31 students. It will outline:

- The structure of the module
- Teaching resources
- Assessment design
- Consider the highlights from the module, as well as some of the changes to be implemented in the 2025/26 academic year.

The module was developed after seeing a real gap in the curriculum on our Law programmes – at no point did students have the opportunity to learn about legal aid, access to justice, or really get to understand how the law can assist the most vulnerable – or in many cases how a lack of assistance lets people down. This talk will hopefully encourage colleagues to consider how they embed social justice into the curriculum.



## James Betts – SEND Judicial Review Project

The project aims to provide access to justice to families of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) that would otherwise have no means to enforce their legal rights. The majority of cases involve disabled children out of school and/or without suitable education.

Students, working under supervision draft formal letters of claim for judicial review.

Many families cannot access support through legal aid. Eligibility for the pre-action stage is based on the means of the parent as opposed to the child. Many families do not qualify for legal aid but are not rich enough to pay a solicitor to send a letter of claim (which can cost up to £1200). Even when a parent qualifies for legal aid, it can be hard to find a solicitor to take on the work. The limited supply of solicitors with legal aid contracts for education cases is simply not enough to meet demand (Law Society, February 2024).

In the vast majority of cases the letter of claim resolves matters but, if it does not, the family is then better placed to secure legal support. This is because legal aid (to bring a claim) is based on the child's means as opposed to their parents.

This project is unique. As far as we are aware, we are the only clinic running this service. There is a wealth of free advice and information for parents but evidence (such as that from the LGO) shows LAs frequently fail to comply with their obligations. It is therefore imperative families are able to enforce their rights through judicial review. This project seeks to fill a gap at a time when some of the most vulnerable children in our society are being failed. We believe the legal profession have a crucial role to play in holding public authorities to account, but the current structure of the legal aid system creates a barrier for parents and children. Our project has been developed to enable parents to enforce their rights with life-changing results for vulnerable children.

## Olayina Lewis – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Student Recruitment to the Law Clinic

This lightning talk will share insights from a current funded project exploring equality, diversity, and inclusion in student recruitment to a law clinic programme at the University of Essex. The project evaluates three years of student application data to identify patterns and possible structural barriers within the recruitment process. The project also aims to develop a robust methodological approach that could be adapted or replicated across other clinics with the ultimate aim of launching a comparative approach across different clinics particularly those with different



recruitment methods (written applications, interviews, first-come-first-served) as well as those who take all applicants.

The talk will briefly outline our evaluation framework, including quantitative analysis of anonymised data and qualitative insights into application processes. We will also highlight our reflections on navigating the ethics of working with sensitive student data within a service evaluation framework.

The CLEO conference offers an opportunity for early sharing of our approach, with the aim of refining the evaluation methodology before finalising our project. Feedback from clinical educators and researchers will be especially welcome in shaping future iterations of the project, including potential extensions into funded research.

This project responds to a need to improve transparency and fairness in access to clinical opportunities and may be of interest to others considering how recruitment practices affect inclusion in experiential learning settings

## Session C – Teaching and Assessment in Clinical Legal Education

### Victoria Roper - The Evolution of Northumbria's Experiential Offering: Showcasing our New Law Degree

The Student Law Office has provided a clinical legal education experience to Northumbria students for over thirty years. Over time Northumbria has expanded its experiential offering to include other forms of clinical and public legal education. This presentation will focus on how a recent revalidation of our undergraduate suite of programmes has provided an opportunity to embed additional, and flexible, experiential opportunities for students at various levels. The intention behind the redesign is to increase optionality and to allow students to engage in a way and place that can fit around caring and work responsibilities to enhance student engagement and performance.

### Laura Bee – Scaling Up Business Law Clinics

The benefits of Clinical Legal Education are numerous and wide ranging, with some students even reporting 'life-changing' and 'transformational' effects. But running a university clinic is resource intensive and, with dramatically increasing students numbers in some law schools, providing clinic experiences for everyone who would benefit can be difficult.



Are there ways for law schools to 'scale-up' clinic-type activities, to reach a larger pool of students? One option is to provide a mix of legal advice, and other pro bono work, which may need less supervision and could therefore accommodate larger student numbers. But is there a way to achieve the student buy-in and high engagement of clinic activities in a more traditional module setting, whilst reflecting the complexities of legal practice and develop client-oriented skills?

The Business Law in Practice module team at Leicester Law School have attempted to do just that. Harnessing Kolb's Experiential Learning Model we developed a final year module where students form a real-life company, registered at Companies House, take on director and shareholder responsibilities, lead the company through its life cycle on an accelerated timeline, dissolving it at the end of the semester. Tutors act as facilitators while learners actively participate and reflect on the experience.

By melding the real-life responsibilities of being a company director/shareholder with simulated semester-long case study details, we explored ways of centring students in their learning experience in a way that is almost clinical legal education, reaping some of the same benefits, but within a traditional module structure.

## Hannah Marchant – Simulated Clinics

Since 2007, law students at Cardiff University have had the opportunity to participate in our NHS Continuing Healthcare partnership scheme. Initially, the scheme assisted the families of nursing home residents to recover care home fees that arguably should have been paid by the NHS, and our clinic recovered for clients more than £300,000 in wrongly-paid nursing home fees. However, more stringent time limits were introduced in these types of cases and students couldn't work quickly enough to meet these deadlines. There were also significant periods of time when the students were not available to work on files due to holidays and exam periods and so the work was being undertaken by Law School staff. This was causing issues in relation to staff workload and also meant that students weren't benefitting from undertaking the work required.

So arguably we had no choice but to adapt and innovate, but were acutely conscious that to run a scheme that did not involve "live" clients may be less attractive to students than "traditional" law clinic/live client work.



From the academic year 2019/20, students participating in this scheme have been working on dummy files - reviewing medical records, drafting letters to 'clients' and other organisations, and developing their advocacy skills through participating in a mock Independent Review Panel. Students obtain valuable employability skills and are provided with the opportunity to network with Partners, Solicitors and Paralegals from a top 100 law firm. A number of students who have participated in the 'new' version of the scheme have gone on to secure training contracts and paralegal roles with Hugh James. We have learned that our initial concerns were perhaps misplaced!

## Lucy Yeatman – Students as Partners in Assessment Design

**Presented by Clementine Simon, Stephanie Whelan, Maisha Rahman and Emily Anderson**

This lightning talk will be presented by four recent Liverpool Graduates who worked as student interns on a project to explore student perceptions of assessment in a law clinic setting. The student interns ran focus groups with law student to find out about their experiences of assessment. They will present some of the themes that been identified in the focus groups discussions.

Our module students undertake an assessment that includes an advice letter to a client and two pieces of reflection at the end of the semester. With the recent and rapid growth of large language model artificial intelligence (LLM AI) software, a significant part of both the reflection and letter writing elements of the assessment can easily be written using freely available software. This has led us to consider reviewing of the assessment but before making any changes I wanted to find out more about the students' understanding of their learning and how they feel about assessment.

Working with students as partners and co-researchers, creates a flat structure without the power imbalance created by a group run by a lecturer. The students are more likely to feel able to speak freely, rather than saying what they think the lecturer wants to hear. Assessment and feedback are the drivers of learning, but for them to be meaningful and useful, students need to be able to engage in a dialogue with assessors and implement feedback to develop. Working alongside students to develop new and different ways of assessing their work will help us to understand assessment from their perspective. It will also encourage them to engage with assessment if they understand it has been designed and developed by their peers.



## Session D – Outreach and Community Partnerships

### Jo Underwood – Digital Exclusion and Homelessness

The King's Legal Clinic has been conducting research into the digital exclusion of homeless applicants, and the impact that this is having on the NHS. Working with local hospitals, we have discovered that nearly all local authorities in London require homeless applicants to complete an online form, rather than offering an initial face to face appointment. This excludes many vulnerable people who cannot easily complete online forms. Many of these homeless applicants present at A&E departments instead, where they know there are social work teams who can help them complete the forms. This costs the NHS a great deal, in both financial and practical terms.

Our research has led to a partnership between the King's Legal Clinic and King's College Hospital (KCH). Clinic students will now be offered an opportunity to work in a 'housing justice clinic' where they will attend KCH to work alongside the A&E team, under the supervision of a clinic housing solicitor. They will assist patients to complete online homeless application forms and will also conduct follow up phone calls to homeless patients who have been discharged, to check that the local authority is complying with their statutory homelessness duties and that their accommodation and tenancy terms are suitable.

There will be further follow up work from this research at a later stage, including the opportunity for students to help with local policy forums to make sure that 'online only' homeless application practices do not exclude people who then rely on A&E for housing help instead.

### Laura Hyde – Ulster Community-based Migration Clinic

This presentation provides insights on the pilot of an innovative community-based migration clinic by Ulster University Law Clinic, developed in direct response to the findings of a 2024 scoping study into the migration advice landscape in Northern Ireland, and in collaboration with key stakeholders in the immigration advice sector. The research and development of the immigration clinic was a collaboration between lecturers with expertise in migration law, and the law clinic manager. The desk-based research identified a critical and persistent gap in access to immigration and asylum advice—particularly outside the legal aid framework—and highlighted the urgent need for capacity-building across the sector.



Rooted in these findings, the Ulster Law Clinic has developed a pilot initiative that blends legal education with community service, with the aim of supporting regulated immigration advisors in Northern Ireland. The clinic engages postgraduate law students through a newly designed International Migration Law module, combining academic study with hands-on legal experience. Activities initially included support with eVisas, to relieve pressure on overstretched practitioners and complement existing legal provision.

The presentation highlights the collaborative model underpinning this initiative, which brings together academic staff from differing disciplines, students, legal professionals, and community organisations. It also examines the pedagogical innovations embedded in the project, particularly how research-informed teaching can equip students with practical skills, while enhancing the broader public interest in immigration law.

### Andy Todd 'We're not OISC/IAA qualified, but here's what we can do...'

This talk will provide an overview of an interdisciplinary research project undertaken by Law students and Graphic Design students with Cheshire West and Chester Council's in-house team supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Between May and July 2025, Law students shadowed the work of the Council's Move On Support Officers and Resettlement Officers (who provide support and assistance to refugees as they transition into, and out of, living environments and communities). In July 2025 the Law students (assisted by the visual designs produced by Graphic Design students to reflect the findings of the project) presented their final report to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

In sharing the findings of the research project, the talk will:

- Illustrate the most pressing – and unmet - legal and practical needs of the asylum seekers and refugees assisted by the Council;
- share the practical recommendations made in the final formal report, comprising tailored solutions to unmet needs that can be provided by Law students to refugees and asylum seekers (and to the Council's in-house team) in the absence of an OISC/IAA qualification; and
- (hopefully) inspire colleagues to work collaboratively with their own local council to discover how to help alleviate the pressure on council services whilst instilling a sense of social justice into their students.



## Finding the SLSJ Building

The Conference will be held at the University of Liverpool in the School of Law and Social Justice Building, Chatham St, L69 7ZR

The University is easy to reach from Liverpool Lime St Station, either a 20 minute walk or a 5 minute taxi ride.

We do not have any visitor parking on campus. There is plenty of parking available nearby but it is not free.

[Maps and directions](#) | [About us](#) | [University of Liverpool](#)